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her chair and sat on the floor. We said to Mwaipopo as he entered: 'There is a daughter-in-law here.' He said: 'That's all right, she is enjoying the company of Kagile (M.W.)', but he was obviously restive, and went outside as soon as food appeared. He said to G.W.: 'That's quite all right, let them go on enjoying each other's company. She (i.e. S—) does not avoid me because M— (a local missionary) brought her to me one day and I killed a bull for them, but let us stay outside now, for they would be ashamed to eat.' The women protested very much saying *they* would go out, but the chief would not agree. As soon as they had drunk their tea they hurried off, and crouching down with their backs towards the men they answered their farewell greetings.

In reply to queries as to why they insist that father-in-law and daughter-in-law avoid one another, the Nyakyusa relate a myth of incest between them: 'Long ago a chief's son married a very beautiful wife. The boy's father saw the girl and after one look desired her, for she was very beautiful, and he said: "She is fit to be a chief's wife (*umwehe*)." Men said this was a very bad thing and agreed that in future they would not look at their daughters-in-law. That is how avoidance began. It was for fear of fathers making love to their sons' wives.' This myth is related with some diffidence, and not everyone knows it, but it was told us, or referred to, repeatedly, and may be taken as current in the society. One informant, a very intelligent woman doctor, also associated seeing a father-in-law with seeing his sexual activities. 'We think that to see your husband's father is very rude, because it is as if you saw him sleeping with your husband's mother. You compare, you see, your husband's body and you see your husband's father's body. It is very bad.'

Age-villages are then associated with the feeling that fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law must be kept completely separate lest they should commit incest, and that adolescent youths should not have any glimpse of the sexual activities of their parents; but the separation of the generations is not complete, for marriage with the daughter of a village neighbour is approved, provided he is not an *immediate* neighbour. Mwakionde explained that in the old days people disliked marriage with the daughter of a next-door neighbour because she was 'like a daughter'—'the fathers ate *embalaga* (a dish made with bananas) together'—but marriage with the daughters of other village-mates was always approved.

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Marriage with the daughter of a father's age-mate is also favoured, though she is called 'a village-sister' (*ulilumbu pa kipanga*), and such a marriage means that a girl has to avoid a father-in-law in her own father's village.

Adultery with the wife of a village neighbour is regarded as a heinous offence, much worse than ordinary adultery, and so also is the seduction of the wife of one's father, or of one of his village neighbours, even though a father's wives are eventually inherited by his son. 'It is bad,' Mwaisumo said, 'because they are friends of one's own mother.' That is to say, there is a direct extension of the incest taboo so long as the father is alive. A son who has committed adultery with his own father's wives is afraid to attend his father's funeral lest he fall dead.[1]

Since marriage between 'brothers and sisters of the village' is approved, courtship goes on between the youths of a boys' village and the girls of their fathers' village, with this limitation, that brothers and sisters, or cousins—the descendants of a common grandfather or great-grandfather—must not be present at a flirtation. Boys from the same age-village go about together, and they commonly flirt with any group of girls they meet, whether from their fathers' village or not. It is then that the incest taboos are learnt. If one of the boys is known to be related to one of the girls his companions send him away saying: 'Don't you see your sister is here? You cannot come.'

Formerly, we were told, girls of the same village lived together (until they were married) in a girls' house (*isaka*), where they were visited secretly by lovers, who had external relations with them. Such girls' houses no longer exist among the Nyakyusa, each daughter living in her father's homestead until she is married, and sleeping with her own mother, or with a step-mother when her father visits her mother, or with the other children in a separate division of the long house, if her mother is the only wife. Only when she is keeping an older companion company at the initiation ritual does she sleep with the other girls of the village in a hut provided by the 'bride's' father.[2] But permanent girls' houses still exist in Ngonde. There each family

[1] Occasionally an elderly man gives his son leave to sleep with his wives in secret, while he (the father) is still alive; then an elaborate ritual is performed on the father's death.

[2] This hut is referred to as *isaka* also, but only during the initiation; it is to be distinguished from a hut regularly reserved for girls.

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Christians are only affected by the shocked astonishment of fellow Christians, not by the disapproval of pagans, and the unit within which 'the curse' is commonly spoken of as operating is the congregation. In two of the cases we recorded (*vide* Document, p. 209) it was suggested that illness was due to the anger of neighbours, fellow Christians, over stinginess and greed, but in the other cases it was not village neighbours who were primarily concerned, but the Christian congregation, a group embracing members from many villages.

The type of behaviour believed to be punishable by 'the curse' of fellow Christians also differs somewhat from that thought to be punished by 'the breath of men'. The virtue Christians emphasize most is chastity, and 'the curse' is often said to be a punishment for fornication or adultery. The other sin commonly spoken of as bringing down a curse is disobedience, or disrespectful behaviour to the minister (or priest) or elder of the congregation. Among pagans 'the breath of men' serves also to sanction sexual morals and to sustain respect for those in authority, but their sex code is different. It is incest, or familiarity between father- and daughter-in-law, which they regard as really evil, not sex relations outside marriage. And they emphasize respect to senior relatives and fathers' neighbours rather than to the leaders of any wider group.

Christians lay much less stress on hospitality to neighbours than pagans, and it is generally agreed that they eat alone more than pagans would dare to do. As one Christian put it, a pagan would *always* call his neighbours to share meat or beer when he had it, but a Christian might eat a sheep, or a goat, or even a calf, alone with his family. It is good, the Christians say, to call friends to share a feast, but not an inescapable obligation. Nor do Christians regularly send the saddle and ribs of any animal they kill to the chief, as pagans do; 'for', they say, 'we do not fear "the breath of men".' But hospitality towards strangers is felt to be a condition of salvation. One informant explained that 'If a man is stingy towards his neighbours it does not matter; but if he is stingy towards a stranger from a distance, he might die from lack of food; and that would be the fault of the stingy one. Such a fault would prevent him from entering Heaven.' This statement points to the most striking difference between Christian and pagan morality—the range of moral obligations. A pagan's duties

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inheriting their stepmothers. Where circumcision is practised a grown woman scorns sex relations with an uncircumcised boy, therefore uncircumcised youths are not potential lovers of their fathers' junior wives; but with the Nyakyusa there is no ceremony to mark the sexual maturity of a male, and adolescent youths are acceptable to young married women of their own age. And not only does the wide difference in the age of men and girls at first marriage allow of a high degree of polygyny, but the very early bethrothal of girls (over whom their future husbands have exclusive sexual rights except during the initiation ritual) means that there are very few girls available to the unmarried men. The institution of girls' huts (*isaka*) has disappeared among the Nyakyusa owing to the lack of nubile girls who are not already betrothed, and the period of seclusion at initiation (when betrothed girls are available to men other than their husbands) is short. The contrast with Nguni society, in which girls do not marry until sixteen to twenty-two, and have several years of great sex freedom before marriage[1] is marked. We suggest that it is because unmarried girls are so scarce and lusty bachelors so many, that the seduction of the wives of polygynists is frequent, and homosexual practices are general.[2] Nyakyusa insist that formerly seduction was rare,[3] and possibly the impulse towards it was indeed less strong when girls married rather later and *isaka* existed (*vide supra*, p. 87).

Lastly, the Nyakyusa permit the inheritance of a father's widows by his sons, a practice regarded as improper by certain other peoples (e.g. the Pondo[4]) who practise the levirate. A son is required to treat all his father's wives as 'mothers' while his father and father's full brothers are alive, and intercourse with a father's wife is treated as a heinous offence necessitating special purification; but after the death of the father and his full brothers these same women become wives of their former 'sons'—with the limitation that a man cannot inherit his own mother or her kins-

[1] Hunter, op. cit., pp. 180–6; M. Kohler, *Marriage Customs in Southern Natal*, pp. 20–44; H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, pp. 135–6.

[2] H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa*, p. 408 (footnote), hints that similar practices exist among the Nyasaland Tonga and elsewhere *before* adolescence only. The Nyakyusa certainly continue after puberty.

[3] MacKenzie, op. cit., p. 63, states that the acknowledged child of an adulterous union was openly put to death.

[4] Hunter, op. cit., p. 211.

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woman. It is scarcely surprising that the seduction of the young wives of an ageing father is a common theme for scandal. We do not suggest that the Oedipus complex involving own mother and son never occurs among the Nyakyusa; what we are concerned to show is that the relationship between a man and his stepmothers is particularly likely to be ambivalent.

It may be asked why there is so much emphasis on the segregation of sons from their parents, and not of daughters. The answer again lies in the sex difference in the marriage age. Betrothed girls pay long visits to their husbands even before puberty, and directly after the initiation which follows first menstruation they leave their fathers' home to join their husbands. During her initiation a girl carefully avoids her father and his contemporaries in the village, and after marriage, when she returns home to visit, she must observe certain restrictions not applicable to an unmarried girl: notably she must not approach her parents' bed, and informants interpret the taboo as being due to the danger of mixing the sex activities of mother and daughter.

In short, we argue that there is a connection between the existence of age-villages and the fear of incest between father-in-law and daughter-in-law on the one hand, and between stepson and stepmother on the other, and we suggest that certain features of the Nyakyusa social system facilitate incest of the second type. The incest theme elaborated in one fashion among people organized in clans and practising clan exogamy, and in another among people practising brother—sister avoidance, finds yet a different expression in age-villages, of which the overt purpose is the separation of sons and mothers, of fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law.

c. Good company

The emphasis on the separation of parents and children is matched by the value laid on good fellowship (*ukwangala*) between contemporaries. A main end of age-villages, in the Nyakyusa view, is to allow men the enjoyment of congenial company, that is the company of friends and equals. The value of *ukwangala* is, indeed, directly linked with the age-village organization: to attain it men must build not only in villages, rather than in scattered homesteads, but also with contemporaries rather than with kin, since there can be no free and easy inter-

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enjoy limited sex relations with a relatively large group of unmarried girls.[1] But the Pondo have exogamous clans numbering, on the average, 3,000 to 4,000 members; marriage into the clan of either parent or either grandmother is prohibited; and clans, though not strictly territorial groups, have a territorial basis. Therefore very many of the adolescents growing up in one area are forbidden to flirt together or marry. Moreover, clan incest is regarded with great horror and is associated very closely with witchcraft. A pregnant woman (who must confess her sins and her dreams that she may have safe delivery) is specifically instructed to confess any flirtations within the prohibited degrees, and to confess if she has had witch-lovers.[2] Even in town, where so many traditional taboos are disregarded, clan exogamy is still insisted upon by Xhosa-speaking people.[3]

Furthermore, in Pondo belief the 'familiar' commonly appears as a European or light-coloured person,[4] and South Africa is a caste society in which sex relations between white and black are very strongly disapproved. We conclude, therefore, that the 'familiar' stands for the embodiment of sex temptation, of forbidden lust, and that the reason why there is so much emphasis on sex in Pondo witch beliefs is that Pondo live in a society in which sex relations between members of certain large groups who are mutually attractive, are regarded with horror.

In Nyakyusa society the pattern is quite different. Sex relations are prohibited only between the descendants of a common great-grandfather, who are in any case scattered in different villages and not constantly meeting one another. And not only are Europeans very few in Nyakyusa country, but the taboo on sex relations between the colour groups is much less strong than in

[1] Hunter, op. cit., pp. 180–4.
It has been suggested by European doctors that limited sex relations are in themselves psychologically disturbing (cf. M. Kohler, M.D., *Marriage Customs in Southern Natal*, p. 33–5), while Africans have argued that such a practice prevents psychological disturbance (cf. J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya*, pp. 155–60).
[2] Hunter, op. cit., p. 148.
[3] Hunter, op. cit., p. 483; R. Levin, *Marriage in Langa Native Location* (Communications from the School of African Studies, University of Cape Town), pp. 13–14.
[4] Hunter, op. cit., pp. 282, 491. My further investigations since *Reaction to Conquest* was published indicate that the 'familiar' is usually described as a European when it takes human form.

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male, the doctor in Selya, is a case of this. He had quarrelled with his elder brother and did not come to bury him. Later he came and killed a cow, but did not tell the men of the village (*amafumu*) properly, and they were angry, and so for the last ten years he has had no child. His wives do not conceive at all. That is due to the curse of men (*ikigune kya bandu*).'

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A curse for 'soiling a man'.
Angombwike (young Christian man).

Angombwike cited a case of sterility attributed to *ikigune* because a woman had 'soiled' a man.

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'She had run away three times with X. Finally her husband forced X to eat her filth and drink her urine. X was very ill but recovered. She bore no further children on her return to her husband. She went to Lyandeleko (the informant's mother) for medicine but the latter said she could not help as it was *ikigune*. Her neighbours were shocked because she had "soiled the child of someone". Also the neighbours of X's father were shocked. Their "breath" takes effect because she visits frequently in their village, going to see a grandparent. They say: "This is the woman who soiled our child." '

N.B.—It is the woman who is held to have suffered, not her husband or X.

A curse due to incest.
Grant (young Christian man).

'A, son of B (a chief), made love to his father's sister X. X's husband, C, had married (*ukusakula*) a full sister, Y, of A. A lay with X. A had syphilis and X and her husband C both fell sick of it. C asked X where the disease came from. She accused A. C complained to B. B was very angry and all men were astonished at it. It is forbidden. How could he have intercourse with his mother, the sister of his father! B took four of A's cows and gave them to C. People cursed (*ukuguna*) A, who was very ill for two years. His eye came out of its socket. He went to a mission hospital.

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'The villagers (*amafumu*) gathered at B's and said: "This sickness of A is because of that case of his when he lay with X. It is because of that he is sick." So B sent to A and told him to bring four cows, which he did. B called his people and brothers and sisters and said: "Bless your child." They swore and swore at him, and they caught hold of the woman and swore, saying: "How did you agree to sleep with your

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child? You have both sinned greatly." Then they killed the cows and ate them. I was there. Very quickly A recovered and his eye is all right now.'

A curse on a senior village headman due to the anger of a junior village headman.
Mwandeba (Pagan man).

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'A young chief, Mwaidemale, called his men to hoe a road at the order of the Government. The third village headman of the country and his men refused to come, saying: "Not we, we have been once already", and they beat Mwaidemale's messenger. So Mwaidemale was very angry, and reported the village headman to his father, who was also very angry and told the headman and all his men (a very big age-village) to move to another chief. And the senior headman agreed, saying: "Indeed, my junior is a proud fellow. Let them go." So they all went to the country of Mwansasu.

'Now the senior headman has fallen ill with the "breath of men". He is unable to walk. The diviner said his illness was due to "the breath" of his junior colleague—he had been cursed because he is reputed to be the favourite of the chief. He was very ill and moved to Korosso's country where he has begun to recover.

'After being away for a year the third headman brought a cow to pay to the chief (Mwakabolofu). The chief refused it, saying: "No, indeed, my country is quarrelsome. Perhaps you think it was you who built it? I do not wish that you should return. Go with your cow." Some of the third village headman's men came back and then Mwakabolofu allowed to build, but he said that he would never let the banished headman back. Many men stayed with their headman and refused to return until he did. Only two years ago (1937) the headman brought two cows to Mwakabolofu who forgave him on the condition that he found something to take to the senior headman, who was ill, to fetch him back from Korosso's country. So the third headman fetched his senior with a huge bull. They came back with it and killed it and drank much beer and made friends. Most of the beer was provided by the third headman, who had spent two years in exile, but some by the senior.

'The mystical power (*amanga*) of the third headman and his men was able to reach the senior headman because a whole village had moved, but had a single man moved he would not have been able to send "breath" to another country, because when "the defenders" come at night in the power of *amanga* (*mmanga gabo*) the owners of the country who remain in it ask them: "Where are you going?" and

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boys tell all sorts of stories, especially about women, they discuss love-making and women, and tell tales of their own conquests. The younger ones listen to these things and that is all right in the boys' village, that is how we learn. But we compare in our minds and think that if a boy stays at home it is as if he listened to all this from his parents, and people always do talk lewdly at night; and that is very bad, that is foolishness.—But in the boys' village it is good for the young ones to listen, that is how children grow up."

On another occasion when I told this same man that in Europe many people thought it a good thing for boys to get sexual instruction from their parents and teachers he was shocked: "But I think it is impossible" he protested "for parents to go into detail with their children; there is too much shame on both sides. And if they did, it would damage the children's respect for them."

There is thus a correlation in this society between the age-village system at its genesis and the belief that a boy's dawning interest in sex must be informed, not by his parents, but by friends only a little older than himself.

Few men marry before twenty-five years of age, but affairs with girls begin before puberty. All affairs are related in detail to friends in the age-village, and the younger ones learn by listening; and they also learn when the older boys send them as messengers to the girls of their fancy.

Besides the more serious love affairs which are carried on in secret, groups of boys from the same age-village commonly flirt with any girls they meet on the way, and it is then that the incest taboos are learnt. If one of the boys is known to be related to one of the girls, either through a common grandfather or great-grandfather, his companions send him away: "Don't you see your sister is here? You cannot come!"

Contrary to a general belief about "primitive" societies, homosexual intercourse is common in the boys' villages, between close friends, but there is no real perversion; homosexuality is said to be always *faute de mieux*. The older men in discussion dismiss it with the tolerant word "adolescence," it is never continued after marriage, and all except the feeble-minded get married sooner or later.

But life in a boys' village also gives its members much information and wisdom unconnected with sex. There, as we have seen, boys perfect their skill in building, and there also they learn to argue and express themselves with adult fluency. It is characteristic of the Nyakyusa legal

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783 Why had Mwaipopo refused so long to enter into relationship with
782 Mwaseba? Mwaipopo explained that the delay was on account of
[684] Mpeta. 'Let my wife come first,' he said, and told how, when the case first came to light, he had taken Mpeta to his kinsman Mwaiteteja, who took her to Mwaseba's village headman, Kakuju, and he to her people. She must come back the same way, and has not yet done so. Ngulyo said that at first he had been inclined to criticize Mwaipopo, but now saw that he was right. Kasitile spoke of the enormity of Mwaseba's offence, for Mpeta is a kinswoman of Mwaipopo's wife
● [835] Kalobo, and on the death of her son Mwakalobo, Mwaseba was put in his place, so he has seduced a woman who, by legal fiction, is his mother, as well as the wife of his father. His act is *doubly* incestuous.

[686] They then spoke of the separation of those who pray at Mbyanga (*vide supra*, p. 80) and blamed them for it. 'Have they millet though? Kyala judges them himself.' Then Kasitile reproved Mwaipopo (the chief) for another matter. 'But you, Mwakagile (116, identified with his grandfather 59) have little wisdom left. Why did you not give some of the beer which we drank recently at your house[1] to the people of Ipinda, the BaKalinga? The food from a distance you should divide.' And Mwaipopo agreed meekly [i.e. Mwaipopo has built with his young wives away from his inherited wife Kalinga (senior widow of 115) and is apt to neglect her; he must send some of the 'food from a distance'—ceremonial presents from affines—to his senior wives, not give it all to his friends and young wives.]

Then there were mutual compliments and self-depreciation between Kasitile and Kissogota (the commoner priest). Kissogota pointed to Mwaipopo and Kasitile, and said: 'You are impressive you, you are impressive, we are mere cannibals (*baljabandu*).' Kasitile replied: 'You are impressive yourself, if I look at you my body changes.'

Suddenly Kissogota got up and pretended to go: 'I am off, friends!' Ngulyo started to protest: 'We have not yet finished, we are speaking.' But Kissogota said, 'No, you told me to "be off"!' He went outside but returned admitting he had been only pretending. Mwaipopo: 'Yes, do you think we don't know you? Drink! Why do you not drink?'

The Mwamakunda began to ask angrily: 'Why do you shut up words in the heart? Why? Do you wish that Mwakisambwe (i.e. Kasitile, 86, identified with his great-grandfather, 30) should become a fool? Kissogota answered: 'We have not yet done so, Mwambagoje (Mwamakunda), we have not yet; do you think we are angry? Who went to fetch Kasitile from the plain? It was we, we went ourselves.'

Njobakosa took up the matter: 'We have power we have, if we
[754] please we can give the chief worms.' (This was said fiercely; Kasitile and Mwaipopo listened without comments. It was the crucial moment

[1] Sent as a present by Mwaipopo's affines.